nish the claim which Felix Summerley has upon all who take an interest in art, for giving a fresh impulse to artistic ingenuity, and directing the attention of artists, manufacturers, and the public, to the value of ornament in things of common use, more especially since it has been his aim to strike out a new style, neither classic, nor Gothic, nor renaissance, but English and original. The shapes of Greek and Etruscan vases, beautiful as they are, are not more adapted to modern pottery or hardware, than is the decoration of the fictile vases: we do not want to convert lachrymatories into scent bottles, funeral urns into teapots, vases into flower-pots; nor are the forms of amphora suitable for decanters, or of patefæ for candle cups. The material and uses of the vessel should determine its form; teapots that would not draw, jugs that cannot be washed clean, glasses and cups that one cannot drink out of comfortably, however elegant their form, are essentially defective. And the adaptation of the thing to its purpose, so far from producing ugliness, tends to beauty; for it involves fitness, which in articles of use is an ingredient of beauty, and it also induces new forms. The problem to be solved is simply this:—given the use and material of the article, to find a beautiful shape. In the commonest, rudest, and oldest implements of husbandry, the plough, the scythe, and the sickle, we have examples of simple and beautiful curves. The most elementary and simple forms, if well proportioned, and of graceful contour, are the most pleasing. To enter into the multifarious details of ornamental design would require a separate paper upon each branch of ornament; and I have already, I fear, engaged attention too long a time. I will only, therefore, notice a few instances where principles are violated by misdirected ingenuity.

Each material has advantages and disadvantages peculiar to itself, and to develop its best qualities ought to be the study of the designer. In glass, for instance, the facets of cut glass produce a brilliant prismatic effect by the refraction of light; angularities, combined with curved forms in glass, therefore, are beautiful and appropriate; but angularities in pottery, vases, jugs, dishes, &c., are ugly and inappropriate. Nor are straight sides and angularities pleasing in metal, whether silver or not; swelling curves are the most beautiful forms for small articles of a polished material, whether porcelain or metal.

The eagerness for novelty, both of purchasers and manufacturers, leads to the adoption of odd and ugly shapes, and the introduction of fantastic and unmeaning or inappropriate ornament; and the necessity for the restraint of principles to prevent ingenuity from being perverted is strongly apparent in the department of ornamental pottery and hardware. The climax of skill would seem to be to achieve deception, aim at impossibility, and give to things the appearance of something which it is not. Thus we have the arum dwarfed, so as to deprive the graceful plant of its elegant form, the stem and leaves cast in bronze or brass with the flower in clouded glass, and stuck in a garden-pot by way of ornament, or converted into a gas-burner or a curtain-holder. Brass fuchsias and lilies hang pendent from cornice poles; bronze plants are made to blossom with wax lights on pier tables, and perhaps we may yet behold a cast-iron tree in a hall bearing fruit in the shape of hats and caps. These absurdities are equally as puerile as the Toby Philpot jugs and duck-shaped sauce-boats that we have come to ridicule. The beautiful paintings on Sevres porcelain, and the painted flowers in relief on Dresden china are equally objectionable in point of art, though for different reasons. In the instance of the Dresden china, the modelled and painted flowers, by their polish and brittleness, want two of the most essential attributes of the beauty of flowers, rich transparent colour and softness: people exclaim, "how natural!" but it is neither true nature nor good art. Miniature paintings on vases are very beautiful; but why injure the effect of the picture by the curve of the vase, and lessen the peculiar beauty of the form of the vase by putting on it a picture that might be better displayed in a frame? As for landscapes on dinner and dessert plates, they are still more absurd; the tart or the fruit effectually obliterates the view of Windermere or Virginia-water, whose beauties are left to the admiration of the scullery maid or the housekeeper. The ornamentation of the Chinese and Japanese vases are as yet unequalled in harmonious richness of colouring, and deserve attentive study, but not imitation. The principle exemplified in their scheme of colour and style of ornament would, if differently carried out, lead to beautiful and novel results. The strange and grotesque become a valuable feature in painted ornament, because it disinclines the eye to follow the forms, and satisfies it with colour. Hence the popularity of the common "willow-pattern" ware; its incongruous and nondescript character, baffling attention, convert its bridge, and temple, and willows into merely vehicles of colour. The blurred pattern ware, where the outline appears as if it were traced in an absorbent material, was an accident; but its effect was so good that it at once became popular: another proof that forms are subordinate, not principal, in patterns.

The practice of ornamenting porcelain by giving it the appearance of marble, is another mistake: a marble jug is an absurdity, almost as great as a mahogany wash-hand basin or a rosewood ewer. Equally absurd it is to paint zinc baths like wainscot, and give to tin chamber-pails the appearance of staves hooped round. Let ornament be ornamental, and shew for what it is,—decoration; and let it be appropriate and subordinate to utility, as well subservient to elegance.

There are other points that need to be touched upon, and these that have been adverted to need fuller investigation; but enough has been said, I trust, to prove the importance of a knowledge and observance of the principles of art by designers, and perhaps to shew, also, that these principles are easily ascertainable by studious attention and rational reflection.

W. Smith Williams.

WHAT THE SEWERS COMMISSION HAVE DONE FOR KENSINGTON.

Sir,—May I again claim your advocacy in The Builder for something to be done towards remedying that nuisance, of which you have before written, the open, stinking, almost stagnant ditch which receives the whole drainage of the town of Kensington, and, passing through the Guardians' premises, has no outlet but into this ditch, which is 4 feet 6 inches above the bottom of the sewer which the Guardians have built under the direction of the Sewers Commission: the excuse now made is, and it is a mere subterfuge, that the levels are not completed. The same story was told last summer, accompanied by a promise that it was hoped that *shortly* some steps would be taken to remedy the evil that had been complained of, as noticed in The Builder.

It is right that the public should be informed of what has since occurred. James-street and Jenning's-building have been visited by the cholera, so many as eighty cases having occurred in this locality, and even up to to-day there were three persons brought away from James-street with virulent fever, arising from this imperfect drainage. The Sewer Commissioners sent down what they called their disinfecting compounds, and the pumping apparatus. They were assisted by the parochial authorities in every possible way, and so far as any cleansing could be of any avail, it was promptly done; but all this deposit of filth and dirt now lies to the depth of several feet in the sewer which passes close to the Kensington Workhouse, in which there are between 300 and 400 inmates; and only such portion of the dirt as will float away has any chance of escape, and then only into this open ditch.

The Sewer Commissioners, under the pretence of doing something to remedy the complaints of the inhabitants, about a month ago sent a steam-engine, and at the mouth of this large and substantial sewer set it to work; but as what they pumped up had to go into this open ditch, they only produced a most awful and destructive stench,—for of course, as the ditch is 4 feet 6 inches above the bottom of the sewer, whatever was raised by the engine went back again into the sewer.

This attempt, like that of an endeavour to fill a sieve with water, was soon abandoned, and so the nuisance remains; but it is thought right that the public should be apprised fully of the doings and *not*-doings of the Sewer Commissioners, and no better channel through which this information is to be conveyed is known than The Builder.

Yours, Mr. Builder, ever truly,
E. H. Nixon, J. P. and Vice-Chairman of the Kensington Board of Guardians.

Bladen Lodge, Old Brompton,
22nd March, 1849.

INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS.

On the 13th, the paper read was "A description of the Camden Station of the London and North-Western Railway," by Mr. R. B. Dockray. Particulars of this were given in The Builder some time ago. In the first design of the railway, in 1833, this station was intended for the sole terminus of the line, and, after much discussion, thirty acres of ground were purchased, although that quantity was considered preposterously large. A very short time demonstrated the necessity for the establishment of the Euston Station solely for passengers; and fourteen acres were there secured, and ultimately covered with buildings. The whole station at Camden-town was then devoted to goods and cattle; and, although in the original design great care was taken to anticipate the wants of the traffic, yet such has been the rapid development of the railway system, that in the space of ten years it has proved necessary to sweep away almost every vestige of the original constructions, and entirely to remodel the station. As the increase of the traffic progressed, the trains in the sidings frequently became of such length as to cause danger to the passenger trains; it, therefore, became necessary to alter the whole disposition, which has been so done as now to give a length of double line of two thousand five hundred feet, for the goods' waggons only, entirely clear of the main line. The circular engine-house, 160 feet diameter, to contain twenty-four engines and tender, with a central turn-table 41 feet in diameter, and an iron roof, was described. Some idea of the extent of the station was given by the statement, that the length of single line of railway, exclusive of the main lines, exceeded 12 miles. There were 112 sets of points, 196 turn plates, and 110 cranes, varying in power from 1¼ to 20 tons. The area of goods' sheds was upwards of 135,000 superficial feet, and that of the platforms was 30,000 feet. The annual consumption of gas exceeded six millions of cubic feet. The supply of water for the locomotive engines was treated of at some length, and exhibited some curious anomalies. The only water that could originally be used, was taken from wells at Tring and at Watford; an attempt was, however, made to obtain a supply at Camden Station, first from the Regent's Canal, and then by sinking a well down 145 feet into the chalk, or to a total depth of 300 feet below Trinity high-water mark. The water from the sand stratum was excluded, and although only that from the chalk was pumped up, which ought to have possessed the same qualities as the water at Tring and Watford, derived also from the chalk, yet it was found to cause the locomotive to "prime," or flush water through the cylinders, with the steam, to such an extent as to seriously impede the progress of the trains. This was shown, by analysis, to arise from the excess of carbonate of soda contained in this well water, which there was an entire absence of in the waters of the wells at Tring and at Watford. The well, therefore, became useless for the engines, but the water was so excellent for household and other purposes, that it has been employed for the general uses of the station, and for the hotels and houses belonging to the company.

The Marble Arch.—As the ultimate destination of the marble arch at the Queen's Palace appears to be at present undecided, allow me to suggest the front of the British Museum (to which his Majesty George the Fourth was a most princely contributor) as an eligible situation.

J. U. S. C.

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